

Some discussion points for problems and solutions when tutoring seniors

**Q1.** What problems do you think that a senior will have in learning a computer?

**Q2.** What are some suggestions to overcome those problems?

| Possible problem                                 | Suggestions   |
|--|---|
| All new terminology and lingo                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use questions to check they have understood.</li> <li>- Allow a pause for info to be absorbed</li> <li>- Get them to do what you've mentioned</li> </ul>   |
| Handicaps. Dexterity; eyesight; hearing; memory. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find out their handicaps; observation; ask</li> <li>- Observe if having mouse or eyesight problems. If necessary use workarounds. Eg double click – single click then push Enter</li> <li>- If hearing then find out which is their best side</li> <li>- Look at them when talking</li> <li>- Get them to write stuff down</li> </ul>  |
| Long time since many have had to learn something | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be patient</li> <li>- Don't get any more technical than you need to</li> <li>- Some have to 'unlearn' ways they have been taught earlier.</li> </ul>   |
| Scared they will break it                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reassure them</li> <li>- Tell them how you haven't broken one yet (Or if you have how it was fixed)</li> </ul>   |
| Forgetting logon and passwords                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get them to write them down EXACTLY and what they are for</li> <li>- Stress that passwords are case sensitive</li> <li>- Don't allow anything that involves finances – eg bank accounts; online shopping</li> </ul>  |
| CAPTCHA characters                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You may need to help them to type in, or read them out for them.</li> </ul>  |
| Not cursor savvy                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 cursors – mouse and typing</li> <li>- Not appreciating mouse cursor shapes</li> </ul>  |
| Unsure what they might use a computer for        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plan a trip – google maps; <a href="http://www.131500.com.au/">www.131500.com.au/</a></li> <li>- Visit places they want to go to or have been at – google street view</li> <li>- Emails – help them get a gmail account</li> <li>- Ask what their interests are and then get them to google for it. Wikipedia.</li> <li>- Dummy gmail accounts to practise with. Same for Skype</li> </ul> |
| Politeness. They don't like to appear stupid.    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage them to ask questions</li> <li>- Watch body language</li> <li>- Get them involved. Only THEY can LEARN.</li> </ul>   |
| Keyboard Skills                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shift, Ctrl, Windows and Alt Keys are modifier keys</li> <li>- Caps Lock simply toggles the action of the Shift key for alpha keys only</li> </ul>   |
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**Q3.** What problems do you think that younger people might have tutoring seniors?

**Q4.** What are some suggestions to overcome those problems?

| Possible problem  | Suggestions   |
|---|---|
| Doing it for them.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By all means show them how to do something. Then get them to do it.</li> <li>- Make sure to always ask permission to take over the mouse or keyboard</li> <li>- If you're not sure on the exact steps then say so; find out; then explain the steps as you repeat them; then get them to do it.</li> </ul> |
| Going too quickly   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Break a task into distinct steps</li> <li>- You can't learn for them. They have to proceed at their pace. This requires patience.</li> <li>- Have a structured step by step sequence</li> <li>- Try not to teach too many skills at the one time</li> </ul>  |
| Talking too quickly   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use questions to check they have understood.</li> <li>- Allow a pause for info to be absorbed</li> <li>- Get them to do what you've mentioned</li> </ul>   |
| Talking too softly  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You don't have to yell at them</li> <li>- Make eye contact, those with hearing difficulties may partially lip read</li> <li>- Avoid talking too quickly and softly</li> </ul>  |
| Not confirming that they have mastered a particular skill before moving on. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Check by getting them to do it or explain some concept back to you</li> </ul>  |
| Explaining too many ways to do something                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pick the easiest least confusing method. By all means mention other ways</li> </ul>  |
| Side-tracking   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If training the basics then ensure competency list worked on</li> </ul>  |
| Being too serious   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remember these oldies used to be young once</li> <li>- Safest humour is against yourself</li> </ul>  |
| Using new terminology   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sure they understand a term or concept.</li> <li>- Try to explain in their terms</li> </ul>   |
| Making assumptions  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some will have prior computer skills, some have none.</li> <li>- Some will have been shown incorrectly- eg not holding a mouse easily; right mouse button use.</li> </ul>  |
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